

Emphasise that the gender pay gap is not only a 'women's issue' – it's in everyone's interest to tackle the divide. Doing so will develop a more productive, loyal and motivated workforce and help attract and retain the best candidates. Try not to let any working group be a 'women only' group.

TIP: Make sure a senior manager is involved so the group's recommendations carry weight.

Request a meeting and propose a joint employer/union working group to look at the data and address any gender pay gap.

1 START THE CONVERSATION

6 REVIEW AND MEET AGAIN

Now you've set up a collaborative working group, agree to meet at regular intervals throughout the year to review progress and discuss new ideas based on staff feedback.

TIP: Any improvement in the gap is unlikely to be immediate. It may take some years before you start to see results. Be realistic.

Don't be afraid to ask for an explanation of any data your employer provides, or any additional data that you think would be useful in identifying why a pay gap has developed.

Do press your employer to set realistic, measurable targets. Seeing improvement, however small, helps keep everyone on side.

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Most UK employers are now required to publish data on the difference in pay between the men and women they employ. Transparency alone won't lead to narrowed pay gaps, so this bitesize guide will help you talk to your employer about how they can bridge the gender pay gap so we can achieve a more equal workplace for our members and their colleagues.

It accompanies UNISON's full gender pay gap bargaining guide, which is packed with helpful checklists and evidence-based policy suggestions, available at unison.org.uk/bridgethegap

WORKING WITH YOUR EMPLOYER TO BRIDGE THE GAP: A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR ACTIVISTS



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GET TO KNOW THE DATA

UNISON's comprehensive guidance on making sense of the gender pay gap will help you to compare your employer's figures to similar employers, or others in your area, and explains which additional data to ask for so that you can identify possible causes of the gap. Once you know what the causes may be, you can start to address them.

Encourage your employer to publish its gender pay gap even if it's not legally required to, for example if it employs fewer than 250 people.

More importantly, push for figures to be accompanied by a summary that explains any gaps and draws up a specific action plan for addressing them.

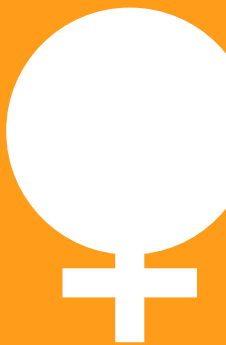
TIP: The action plan to address the gap is key to holding your employer to account.



LOOK AT PAY STRUCTURES

Is your employer getting the basics right? Women shouldn't be paid less than men for the same work, or work of equal value – that's been against the law since the Equal Pay Act was introduced in 1970. But it's worth making sure that these practices haven't crept in to the pay structure. Press for an equal pay audit to check whether women are being paid differently for doing the same work. Done regularly, this shouldn't be burdensome for the employer.

Check whether your employer uses job evaluation in its pay structure. If it doesn't, encourage it to adopt such a system to help avoid the need for equal pay claims.



REVIEW POLICIES

Propose a review of all policies that might affect the gender pay gap, including those on recruitment, training, progression, flexibility, caring and women's health.

For example:

Review recruitment practices and materials, specifically checking whether they use gendered language or could be off-putting for women. Do the same for training and apprenticeships.

TIP: Check the list of 'essential' and 'desirable' criteria. Research shows women will generally only apply for a job if they meet 100% of the stated criteria – for men it's 60%.

Seek improvements to the package available for maternity pay and leave, and promote shared parental leave to boost take-up among men.

TIP: Explore options for phased return from maternity leave

Press for a fuller range of flexible working options throughout the pay structure, including making flexible working requests available from day one of employment.

TIP: Highlight flexible working to men to help avoid perpetuating the assumption that women should fulfil caring roles.



COMMUNICATE THE CHANGES

Ask the employer to communicate any policy changes clearly to staff and explain timescales and their intended effects.

Make sure staff are kept updated and that their feedback is welcomed, collected and properly considered.